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# Lawrence van Gelder, President of the Gold Creek Bank, After the Funeral

by Robert Cooperman

I'm the bearer of bad tidings  
for his widow, their account not  
nearly as flush as she might hope.  
Preacher sipped at it  
like a hip flask of brandy,  
to satisfy Mary's expensive tastes.

I was besotted with the dove, too,  
possessing a grace of form and face,  
a generosity to laugh at bad jokes,  
a cunning of fingers brushing  
against trousers almost by accident.  
She knows nothing moves a man  
to gratitude like the advance,  
retreat, advance of his pleasure.

When I tell Widow Burden,  
she won't pitch a fantod,  
as would Judge Sam's wife,  
were she to learn His Honor moves funds  
like a man cheating at checkers.  
Miz Lavinia will stand sentry-smart,  
and angular, only the set of her shoulders  
hinting she could blow up the town  
with her rage at Preacher's betrayal.

Maybe, heavy with sin, he plunged  
down that played-out shaft.  
Or someone envied his exclusive  
enjoyment of Mary's talents:  
Judge Delaney, for instance, a coward  
who'd pay for his dirty business  
to be taken care of by a third party.

